



Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route News

SUMMER/FALL 2004

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the entire NPS study team, I am pleased to present the second newsletter on the National Park Service's Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route study. We are making steady progress on the Special Resource Study and Environmental Impact Statement. This newsletter is intended to provide an update on the study's progress, schedule, and components, with a particular focus on potential management alternatives with NPS involvement. We invite you to share this newsletter with anyone you think may be interested. More important, we encourage you to send us specific comments on the alternatives. If you would like to see more in-depth information about the project, please visit our website at www.nps.gov/boso/w-r

Sincerely,

Lawrence Gall
Deputy Associate Regional Director
Planning and Partnerships
National Park Service Northeast Region



Your input on the proposed alternatives is very important to this process. Please review these materials and let us know what you think!

Project Overview

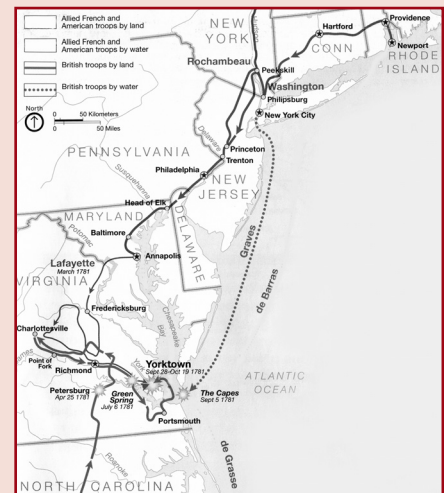
This study was authorized by the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Heritage Act of 2000 (PL 106-473). The legislation was introduced in the House by Representative John Larson (CT), in the Senate by Senator Joseph Lieberman (CT) and was cosponsored by 42 congressmen and women, including seven from outside the study area. This act directed the NPS to: 1) evaluate the national significance of the route and its resources, and 2) develop alternatives for NPS involvement in managing, preserving, and interpreting these resources. In response, the Park Service's Northeast Regional and National Capital Region offices assembled an interdisciplinary team and initiated this Special Resource Study (SRS).

The NPS uses SRS's to assess whether a resource should be added to the National Park system or whether another management option is more appropriate. The SRS process involves four criteria including:

- determining if the resource is nationally significant;
- assessing the suitability of the resource for inclusion;
- establishing that its inclusion is feasible and there is a need for

federal management; and

- developing a range of potential management alternatives.



En route to the battle, troops began in Newport and ended in Yorktown; they returned along the same route, ending in Boston.

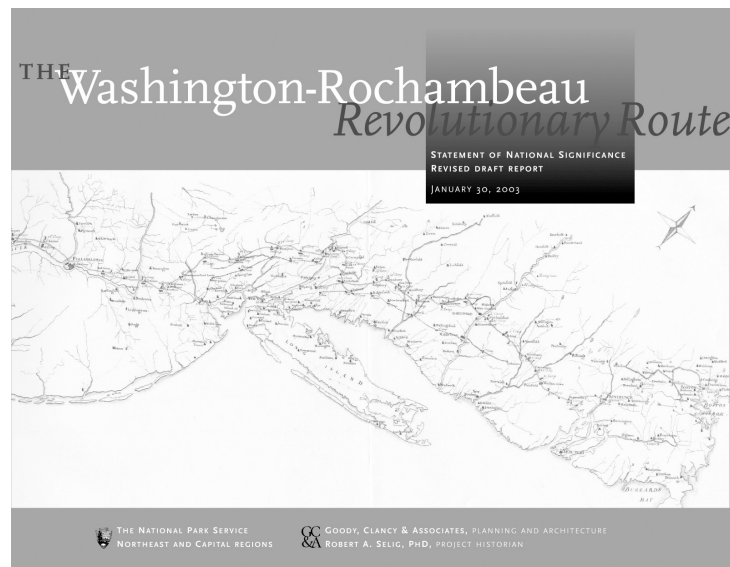
The previous newsletter reviewed the project and history of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route, described the project timeline and tasks, highlighted key criteria that must be met as part of an SRS, and provided preliminary management alternatives. The primary purpose of this newsletter is to present more detail on the potential management alternatives in order to gather additional public input.

New to the Project? A Brief History

The Washington-Rochambeau route is a 600-mile route that was used by generals George Washington and *comte de Rochambeau* and their troops during the American Revolutionary War. It passes through Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and what is now Washington, D.C., and is composed of roads, camp sites, ports, and other route-related resources. The Continental Army and the French military joined forces to march along this route in 1781, taking a combination of intricate land and water trails that led them to the decisive siege of Yorktown, Virginia, where they succeeded in defeating the British army serving under General Cornwallis. Subsequently, various military parties followed similar return routes northward: Washington and the Continentals returned to defend northern posts while Rochambeau and his army wintered in Williamsburg, then marched back in the summer of 1782. In the towns and cities they passed through along the way, both American and French forces were warmly greeted and celebrated. In the fall of 1782, the bulk of Rochambeau's troops marched into Boston, and by year's end, sailed back to France.



This image, one of the few contemporary depictions of the Washington-Rochambeau march that has survived, illustrates French troops resting on their way to Yorktown, Virginia.



Completing the Significance Report was one of the first steps in the study process; when the route was found to be nationally significant, the study team was authorized to proceed with subsequent steps of the NPS study.

What's Been Done

Although the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route study authorization was not structured as a Trail Feasibility report, the study team decided to apply the criteria of the National Trails System Act in order to determine the appropriateness of a National Historic Trail designation as one alternative for NPS management (see page 4 for more information on this proposed alternative). Therefore, the first step of this study was the preparation of a Significance Statement report, which was developed and then submitted to the NPS Advisory Board and its Landmarks Committee for review. Based on the research and findings conducted by the study team, the Significance Report made the assertions that the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route is nationally significant because of:

- 1) its cross-cultural impacts resulting from sustained contacts between the French and American armies, which contributed to the formation of a national American identity; and
- 2) its manifestation of the international war effort, demonstrated in the successful military collaborations between French and American forces in the achievement of American independence.

As of June 2003, both the Board and Committee affirmed that the route is indeed nationally significant. For more information on the contents of the Statement of Significance report, see www.nps.gov/boso/w-r/files/W-RDraftSignificanceStatement.pdf

Since then, the study team has been conducting research on a number of fronts related to other elements of the study, including further definition of the historic route and associated resources, and an evolution of the management alternatives from the preliminary concepts that were presented in the fall 2003 newsletter. The potential management alternatives are described in more detail on pages 3-5.

Over the course of this summer, we will be finalizing the management alternatives based on your feedback, and initiating development of the draft SRS that will also include a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). An EIS assesses the probable impacts of each alternative on the natural and socio-economic environments. Following completion of the draft study report, a public comment period will begin. Once the public comments are assimilated, a final SRS/EIS will be developed and submitted to Congress.

Suitability

The second step in the SRS process, after establishing national significance, is to determine whether or not a resource would make a suitable addition to the National Park system. Analysis of suitability entails comparison of the resource with other NPS units to assess whether the resource is already adequately represented. The team has documented other comparable historic, cultural, and recreational resources within the NPS and determined that the Washington-Rochambeau route and history is unique. NPS units considered include:

- Colonial National Historic Park
- Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network
- Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail

Further suitability assessment will be included in the draft study.

Feasibility

The third step in the SRS process requires determining whether or not a resource could be feasibly managed within the National Park system. Currently the team is in the process of assessing the feasibility of managing the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route under various schemes. Specific factors that contribute to feasibility include:

- proposed size and configuration;
- current land uses and resource protection policies;
- existing impacts and threats to the resource; and
- social and environmental impacts.

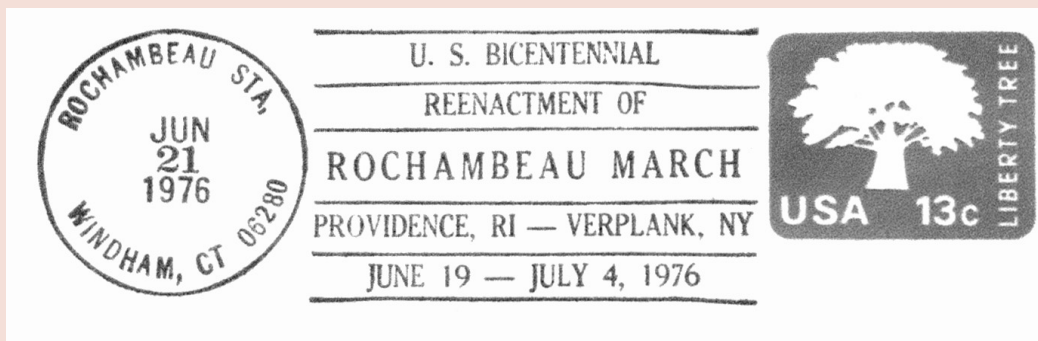
A discussion of the feasibility assessment will be included in the draft study.

If the assessment concludes that parts or all of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route require NPS involvement, then the draft will include a recommendation for further federal action to be taken.

Comparing the Proposed Management Alternatives

As mentioned, the last step in the SRS process requires development of a series of management alternatives. In the context of this study, three alternatives are being explored that present broad directions for management of the route.

The first concept, “No Action,” is a baseline description of current conditions, authorities and policies, and what the likely outcome would be without any new federal action. This description is required by law in order to provide a comparative basis for “action” concepts. The two “action” concepts present various approaches to management, education/interpretation, preservation, potential partnerships, and visitor uses and experiences. After public and agency review of the pros and cons of these concepts, the alternatives may be refined. They will be further described in the draft SRS/EIS.



This stamp celebrates the re-enactment of the march as part of celebrations marking the bicentennial of American Independence. Many parks and organizations are actively preparing for events associated with the route's 225th anniversary in 2006.

Alternative 1

No New Federal Action (No Action)

In Alternative 1, various efforts in states and individual communities focused on enhancing public awareness of the 600-mile Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary route would continue. No congressional action would be required and any federal involvement would remain limited to providing technical assistance as allowed under existing laws.

The recently formed National Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Association (W3R-USA)* would continue its effort to foster communication among various local and state-level efforts, with a particular focus on preparations for the commemoration of the 225th anniversary of the march in 2006. As this volunteer effort does not have the technical or financial capacity to sustain a multistate effort over the longer term, interpretation and preservation along the 600-mile route will likely continue to be limited and piecemeal.

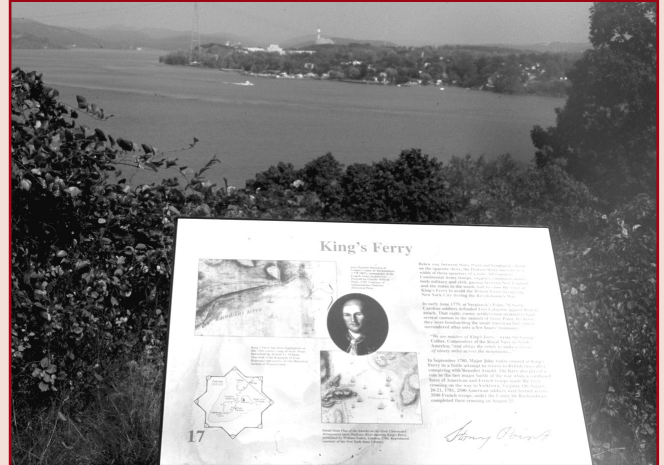
* The W3R-USA is a non-profit organization formed in 2003 whose membership is comprised of groups and individuals that support enhancing public appreciation of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route.

Alternative 2

Washington-Rochambeau National Historic Trail

In Alternative 2, the proposed Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route would be established by Congress as a national historic trail within the national trails system. Between Boston and Yorktown, the trail would serve interpretive, educational, commemorative, and retracement purposes through recreational, driving, and water-based routes. The NPS would participate in a shared management scheme with a new nonprofit trail organization, as well as state and local agencies and other interest groups. A trail management plan would be developed by the NPS. This plan would include guidance and standards on issues such as signage; certification of sites; interpretive and educational content for exhibits and promotion materials; and research and preservation. A trail advisory board, formed of an appointed group of representatives, would be established to advise the NPS on trail implementation issues.

The newly established nonprofit trail organization—which could incorporate constituencies currently constituting the W3R-USA together with other interested groups and agencies—would assist with some aspects of plan implementation, as well as undertaking other tasks such as advocacy, commemoration and fund raising. Limited federal financial assistance would be provided; it would be dedicated to trail management and administration and to supporting groups engaged in interpreting and preserving the trail and its resources. The federal government would not acquire land or resources associated with the trail.



Interpretive signage, such as this one at King's Ferry on the Hudson River, could be extended and improved as a component of a national historic trail alternative.

Over time, the historic route would be marked as continuous segments on the ground or at water access points; in a few places, physical trail segments could be enhanced. Where feasible, modern road segments that follow the known routes would be marked for travel. In areas where development and related impacts have diminished or destroyed access to or along the historic routes, interpretive waysides or other informational means could be applied, as appropriate. Modern roads could be used as deviations from the original routes if deemed necessary to protect fragile historic resources, provide continuity, or protect public safety.

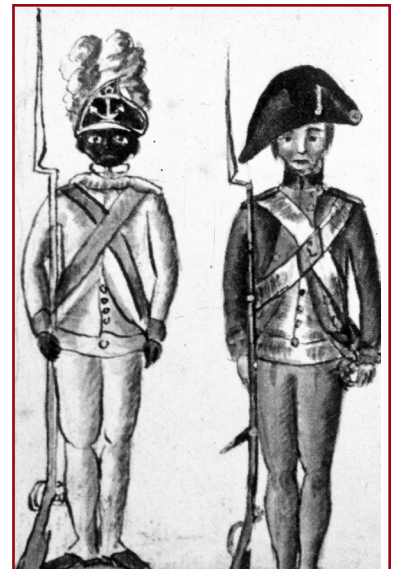


Numerous plaques, markers, monuments, and other physical resources—listed on the National Register of Historic Places and/or protected as National Historic Landmarks—can be found commemorating the 1781 route.

Did you know?

Washington-Rochambeau resource studies have recently been completed and published in Connecticut, New York, and Delaware. Rhode Island and Virginia are following suit and raising funds to initiate similar studies...

Colonial farmers and traders preferred selling to the French troops who paid in hard currency, as opposed to American troops, who lacked money because they had not been reimbursed for their military service...



Depictions of soldiers of the First Rhode Island Regiment and of the Canadian Regiment, from the journal of a sub-lieutenant in the French forces.

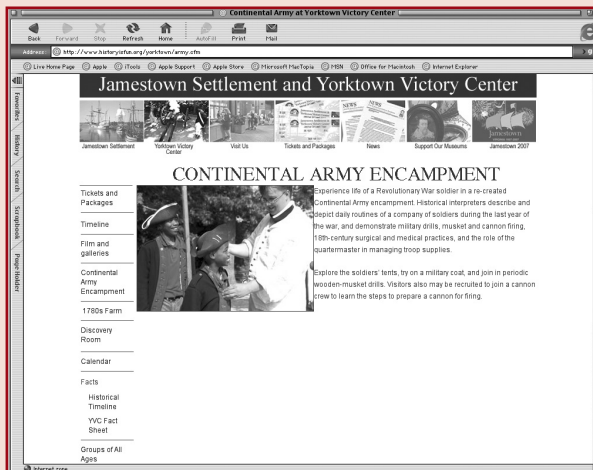
Did you know?

The latest phase of route research has revealed new details about the complexity and intricacy of the joint forces' routes and strategies...

Nearly one-quarter of all American troops were African-American, and the First Rhode Island Regiment—composed of African-Americans—was noted to be the “most neatly dressed, the best under arms, and the most precise in its maneuvers”...



As this newsletter goes to print, Lee Patrick Anderson, Director of Program Development at Fort Mifflin, is conducting a 21-day trek that follows the Washington-Rochambeau route from Newport to Williamsburg, in order to raise public awareness about this important historical event...



Education and information resources, such as those depicted on this website for the Yorktown Victory Center, illustrate how partnerships and distance learning opportunities could be the building blocks of a heritage project.

Alternative 3

Washington-Rochambeau Heritage Project

In Alternative 3, the proposed Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route would be designated by Congress as a heritage project intended to advance and promote public understanding of Washington-Rochambeau stories along the route and at thematically associated sites in nearby areas. A management entity for the heritage project would be established through legislation; it would work with partners, including the NPS, other federal, state and local agencies, and interest groups. Federal assistance would be provided for a period limited to 10 years. Over this period, the management entity would develop a management plan that would establish the necessary

measures, partnerships and funding to support their continued operation. The federal government would not acquire land or resources associated with the heritage project.

The management entity could include representation from each of the states and Washington, D.C., members currently active in the W3R-USA, and other constituencies. This organization could work with any other partners that can help communicate the Washington-Rochambeau story, potentially including existing Revolutionary War-related National Park system units or even comparable international efforts, such as French military and commemorative organizations. The management entity would have the authority to receive federal funds and administer and disperse them. As designated by the federal enabling legislation, it could establish mutual agreements with the states, counties, localities and other groups. The NPS would provide technical assistance related to development of the heritage project plan.

The Washington-Rochambeau heritage concept would focus on interpretation and preservation of key areas where intact resources provide a context for a meaningful visitor experience. Through partnerships with other historic sites and organizations, these areas could be developed as “centers” of thematically linked resources along or near the route of the march. The centers could feature a range of experiential options—for example, visitor centers, historic structures, preserved campsites, and interactive interpretive facilities. The development of a Web-based program could also allow interested parties to gain access to these resources through virtual media. Such “centers” could be placed within the overall context of the Yorktown campaign and the Revolutionary War.

Study Team

The study team is composed of planners from the Northeast Region of the National Park Service, the National Capital Region of the NPS, the planning firm of Goody, Clancy & Associates, the environmental and engineering firm of Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc., and historian Dr. Robert Selig.



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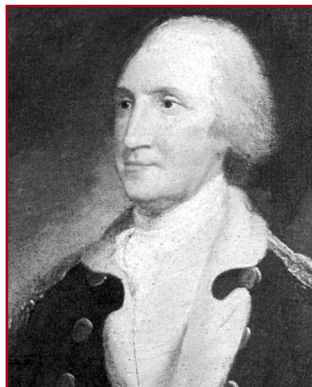
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How to Stay Involved

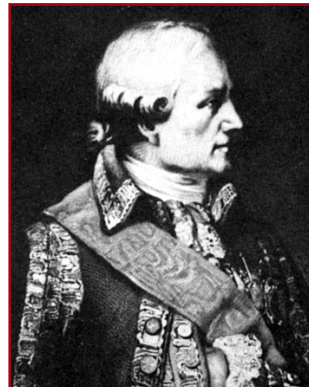
Please take some time to review the potential management alternatives for the Washington-Rochambeau resources that are presented here. Then share your thoughts about them with us. Some of the questions you might consider responding to include:

- What aspects of each alternative do you find most desirable? What aspects are least appealing?
- Do you have a preference for a particular alternative? If so, why?
- Is there additional information about the alternatives that would assist you in commenting on these alternatives?



Washington, by Robert Edge Pine
Independence National Historical Park

You can mail, fax, or e-mail your comments to:



Rochambeau, *artist unknown*

Vicki Sandstead, Historian
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Fax #: (617) 223-5164
Email: Vicki_Sandstead@nps.gov

Remember, these potential management alternatives are still being refined. At this stage, each alternative is considered equally valuable; no decisions have been made about which is preferred.

Please assist us in reaching those decisions. And thank you for your help!